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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AORC](#) [AF](#) [UNGA](#)  
SUBJECT: UNGA DEBATES SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

¶1. SUMMARY: On November 10, the UN General Assembly considered the situation in Afghanistan, and adopted by consensus a resolution reaffirming international commitment to rebuilding the country. Virtually every speaker expressed strong concern over the increase of attacks against humanitarian aid workers in Afghanistan. Delegates agreed that a successful strategy would be centered on the principle of Afghan ownership. Many noted the progress that has been made over the past seven years, and emphasized that refocused international coordination was needed to overcome the remaining challenges. END SUMMARY

¶2. On November 10, the UN General Assembly considered the situation in Afghanistan, and adopted draft resolution A/63/L.17, entitled "The Situation in Afghanistan," by consensus. Nineteen delegations spoke, many underscoring the need to promote social and economic development before the security situation fully could be addressed. Virtually every speaker expressed strong concern regarding the significant increase in attacks against humanitarian aid workers in Afghanistan. Several speakers, including Ambassador Khalilzad, offered their condolences in light of the deaths of two Spanish soldiers in Afghanistan the day before the debate.

¶3. The Afghan PermRep reminded the Assembly of the "noble purpose" of the international force in Afghanistan, which he defined as "to prevent the malady of terrorism from infesting a nation and the world." "Never again," he declared, "will the Taliban regime have control of a country and crush the hopes, dreams and lives of their own people. Never again should Al Qaeda have sanctuaries in Afghanistan and elsewhere to project its extremist terror to kill thousands of innocent people across the world." The PermRep called for a strategy based on three principles: increased Afghan ownership at every level and in every dimension; international refocus on the overall security of the Afghan people; and a re-emphasis on regional partnerships. He highlighted the progress made in building schools, health clinics, roads, and telecommunications infrastructure, in human rights and rule of law, and in counter-narcotic efforts. The Taliban was fighting a "war of perception" he stated, and the international community must remain vigilant to demonstrate its success to the Afghan people. Noting that there were two Afghanistans, one portrayed in the media, and the other "experienced by millions of Afghans building daily lives in peace," the PermRep implored the Assembly not to forget the "second Afghanistan."

¶4. Ambassador Khalilzad delivered the U.S. statement, which stressed that success required the Afghan government to make tough decisions to implement agreed policies in the areas of local governance, combating corruption, enforcing rule of law, achieving economic development, pursuing robust counter-narcotic efforts, and reform of the police forces. Ambassador Khalilzad underscored the important role played by Afghanistan's neighboring states in cooperating against terrorists and extremists. He noted that the U.S. deeply regretted the accidental loss of civilian lives in Afghanistan, and assured the Assembly that the U.S. would take every precaution to prevent civilian casualties. The

statement also called upon Member States to assist the Afghan people in preparing to deal with food shortages and cold weather, in order to avoid a worsening humanitarian situation this winter. (The complete text of the U.S. statement can be found at [www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov](http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov).)

¶5. The Pakistani PermRep focused on the stress the situation in Afghanistan was causing in Pakistan, including its massive population of Afghan refugees, and the high number of deaths of Pakistani soldiers and innocent civilians on its border with Afghanistan. Pakistani support for international efforts in Afghanistan, he continued, required "reciprocal cooperation based on goodwill, respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and mutual commitment not to allow our respective territories to be used against each other." The French PermRep affirmed the European Union's support for identifying criteria to measure aid effectiveness; establishing a database to track resources per donors' commitments; and strengthening the Afghan institutions working to combat corruption. He emphasized that the challenges in Afghanistan required a political solution.

¶6. In introducing draft resolution A/63/L.17, the German PermRep reminded the Assembly that the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan remained the "heart" of the international community's efforts, with the ultimate objective of improving the lives of Afghans. The resolution, he stated, would emphasize the Assembly's solidarity with the Afghan people and send a strong message of support for the international community's efforts to rebuild the country after "devastating years of Taliban terror." The PermRep highlighted the progress made in Afghanistan during the past

seven years, noted the need for further efforts to improve governance in Afghanistan, and encouraged the Afghan government to take further actions to combat terrorism, drug production and trafficking, and corruption, as well as continued judicial reform efforts.  
Khalilzad